

Wed Mar 10 15:33:14 EST 2021
"Hope, Brian" <Hope.Brian@epa.gov>
FW: GM Mosquitoes - EPA EUP approval discussion
To: "CMS.OEX" <cms.oex@epa.gov>

From: Nishida, Jane <Nishida.Jane@epa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 1:35 PM
To: Hope, Brian <Hope.Brian@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: GM Mosquitoes - EPA EUP approval discussion

From: Barry Wray <support@fkec.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 12:38 PM
To: Nishida, Jane <Nishida.Jane@epa.gov>
Cc: engagement@ostp.eop.gov; president@whitehouse.gov; NSTC@OSTP.eop.gov; vice.president@whitehouse.gov; Ed Russo <erusso7404@aol.com>; Mara Daly <maradaly37@yahoo.com>; Meagan Hull <morrisonmeagan2014@gmail.com>; Dana Perls <DPerls@foe.org>; Jaydee Hanson <jhanson@centerforfoodsafety.org>; Diane Reeves <gmofreeusa@gmail.com>
Subject: GM Mosquitoes - EPA EUP approval discussion

Dear Administrator Nishida,

I am writing today to request a discussion and your direct oversight regarding the EPA 2020 Experimental Use Permit (EUP) EPA-HQ-OPP-2019-0274 approval paving the way for Oxitec, the product vendor, for open field release the OX5034 germ-line edited, gene-drive species of mosquito in the FL Keys. This EUP was approved without sufficient scientific investigation into this complex and novel technology, under duress created by a political operative during the prior administration.

Our concerns increase daily as the pending first release is planned in a matter of weeks. We ask for your review and intervention with an immediate pause for any planned releases, to provide sufficient time for investigation. Together with President Biden’s directive on trust and scientific integrity, we feel it is imperative that this EUP be revoked and a proper scientific investigation ensue into this technology (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/memorandum-on-restoring-trust-in-government-through-scientific-integrity-and-evidence-based-policymaking/>). Our Congressman Gimenez has submitted an official Congressional Letter of Inquiry to the EPA on this subject as well (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FKEC.org/permalink/5276401789067719/>). The level of investigation required to understand the true quantifiable risks associated with this technology will benefit all stakeholders, the EPA, the Vendor, our community and the ecosystems we are stewards of.

The group I represent, the Florida Keys Environmental Coalition (FKEC.org) and a much broader coalition that includes respected science based NGOs and many recognize leaders in the fields of genetic engineering, microbiology and ethics, stand in objection to the open release of this technology. We object to the release with a comprehensive understanding of the scientific issues that have not been properly independently investigated, set against the background of documented political interference via a high profile influential lobbyist, Roy Bailey, who successfully excerpted pressure upon the EPA during an opportune period. The actual announcement of the EUP comment period, was accompanied a two page marketing memo as sufficient content for the public to respond with specific relevant input. At the end of the comment period over 31,000 comments had been lodge against the release with 56 for.

Germane to this discussion is the context of this particular vendor’s documented performance with their proprietary technology, which includes repeated failure, ethical violations in many global venues and clear departure from scientific principles and methods in order to misrepresent facts, apparently motivated by product marketability goals. In their application for a similar EUP, to release the OX513A version of their technology, our meetings with the EPA science team clearly identified scientific concerns with the technology and cognizant significant misrepresentations made by the vendor in their submission package.

We can assemble a team of relevant scientific contributors, including heads of Genetic Engineering programs, professors in Microbiology and a variety of experts from notable US Universities, who are in support of this field of discovery, but express clear objection to any release with the level of investigation that was provided under a cloud of political influence, enabled by conditions fostered under the last administration.

We look forward to your acknowledgement and response to this issue. This is not a FL Keys, issue this is a national issue enabling the release of a genetically modified gene drive species without proper knowledge of what the risks are.

Thank you for your time.

Barry Wray

Executive Director

Florida Keys Environmental Coalition

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0926

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Jane Nashida
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Acting Administrator Nishida:

I am writing you today to inquire on an issue that has been raised to me by the Florida Key's Environmental Coalition (FKEC) in Florida's 26th Congressional District. FKEC is a constituent coalition aimed at protecting the health and safety of citizens along with the ecosystem of the Florida Keys. They have recently brought to my attention their concerns relating to the process by which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the Experimental Use Permit (EUP) granted to Oxitec as it relates to Genetically Modified Mosquitos (GMM) in Monroe County, Florida.

Previously, as mayor of Miami-Dade County, Florida I was responsible for trying to mitigate the spread of the Zika virus by mosquitos, so I understand the importance of these efforts. With that being said, I believe the concerns of my constituents living in the community where this EUP will be used deserve mine, and the EPA's consideration. I am requesting that you provide my office with any available independent corroboration:

- 1) Showing that no genetically modified female mosquitos will be released under this EUP.
- 2) What, if any, adverse impact these mosquitos might have on the ecosystem throughout the Florida Keys, and specifically threatened or endangered species.
- 3) What adverse impact this might have on the food chain through ingestion by local popular consumable marine life.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, and I ask that you give this request your full and fair consideration consistent with applicable statues and regulations. If you have any questions please contact my Deputy Chief of Staff, Nicole Rapanos (nicole.rapanos@mail.house.gov) or my Legislative Director, Chase Clanahan (chase.clanahan@mail.house.gov).



Carlos A. Gimenez
MEMBER OF CONGRESS